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C U R S O R Y
O B S E R V A T I O N S

On a PAMPHLET, entitled,
A N
ADDRESS to the CLERGY
O F T H E
CHURCH of ENGLAND in particular,
A N D

To all CHRISTIANS in general.

H U M B L Y P R O P O S I N G

An Application to the Right Reverend the BISHOPS, or
through their Means to the Legislature, for such Relief
in the Matter of SUBSCRIPTION, as in their Judgments
they shall see proper: together with the Author's Sen-
timents of the present Forms; and his Reasons for such
an Application.

By FRANCIS WOLLASTON, L.L.B. F.R.S.
Rector of Chislehurst in Kent.

By A L A Y M A N.

Remove not the ancient Land Mark which thy Fathers
have set. PROV. xxii. 28.

Faithful are the Wounds of a Friend; but the Kisses of an
Enemy are deceitful. PROV. xxvii. 6.

L O N D O N,

Printed for G. ROBINSON, No. 25, in Pater Noster-Row; and
sold by J. ROBSON, in New Bond-Street; J. WALTER, Char-
ing-Cross; Mr. PRINCE, at Oxford; and Mr. WOODYER,
at Cambridge. 1773.



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C U R S O R Y

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

SEEING advertised a pamphlet intituled *An Address to the Clergy of the Church of England in particular, and to all Christians in general*, By Francis Wollaston, LL. B. F. R. S. I had a mind, being one of the people called *christians in general*, to know what the gentleman had to say to me, and accordingly I sent for it. “Free choice and “a desire of doing good in my generation,” as the author expresses it, led me to make a few observations on the said pamphlet, and to present them to the public for their emolument.

Mr. Wollaston sets out with acquainting us that he is an *obscure brother*, and, lest any sceptical mind should doubt the truth of it, he has proved it to a demonstration at the

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very

very entrance of his address, as I believe every body will allow, who reads the following sentence—"While his wishes were confined within his own breast, or the small circle of his acquaintance, it would have been impertinent (he might have added *and impossible*) to have laid them before the public eye: but when he conceives hopes of engaging *others* to assist in bringing them to effect, as they have a right to enquire into the reasons of his conduct, so he can have no prospect of success but from their approbation of what he has to propose*."

On a supposition that we shall "wish to know more of him than the name he bears," he next informs us, "he is one, whom free *choice*, and a desire of doing good in his generation, led at first into the ministry, for which his friends and family had not intended him†." This piece of intelligence cannot fail to give his readers a very favourable opinion of the good sense and judgment of his friends and family; and the more we see of him, the more we shall be disposed to wish that he had listened to their advice, instead of following his own inclinations.

* P. 3.

† P. 4

He says indeed, that “ they who know him
 “ best, cannot charge him with want of at-
 “ tention to the duties of the office he has
 “ undertaken* ;” and we, who know him
 not, are to believe him, I suppose, on his
 own word ; but methinks this is speaking ra-
 ther too much in the strain of one, who said,
 “ I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of
 “ all that I possess ;” and the evidence would
 have been less suspicious, had he not born wit-
 ness of himself, for “ *Pride of heart, some-*
 “ times, *deceives men.*”

He assures likewise, that “ he is a *sincere*
 “ friend, to the *religious establishment* in this
 “ kingdom † ;” but his *sincerity* is of such an
 extraordinary nature as I never desire to ex-
 perience in a *Friend* ; for he confesses, that in
 subscribing “ the form now required, he
 “ used that *Latitude* in the interpretation of
 “ the Articles, which is no where expressly
 “ authorised ‡ ;” that is, in plain English, he
 declared his *unfeigned* assent and consent to
 doctrines, which he did not believe, and
 which he heartily wished to be well rid of.
 This was from “ *free choice*,” and might be
 from “ a *desire* of doing good in his genera-
 “ tion ;” but it was *doing evil, that good might*

* p. 4.

† *ibid.*

‡ p. 5.

come, and that is a practice not altogether warranted, I think, by the apostolical canon. See Rom. iii. 8.

It seems however, that so long as there was no prospect of success from divulging his *real* sentiments, he kept them stifled within his own breast; but when the spirit of sedition began to blow at the Feathers Tavern, the *strange* fire kindled, and he spake with his tongue. “ He did not enlist indeed “ with the first movers*” in the New Association; but it was not because he thought them wrong, but because he doubted, from their method of application, whether they would obtain their ends; for “ he really believes they were actuated by a sincere and “ pious zeal for the cause of Christianity†;” and, “ if our superiors, in their wisdom, “ should see it right wholly to lay aside *all* “ subscriptions, he has no objection to it ‡.” So that the gentlemen at the Feathers, and our Champion with his new raised corps of volunteers, for which he has been beating up for some time, have evidently both the same end in view, and both mean the destruction of the Church; they only differ as to the mode of attack, the former thinking

* p. 5.

† *ibid.*

‡ p. 7.

to carry all by storm, and the latter chusing rather to proceed by way of sap. The *Patriots* in the *Church*, as well as those in the *State*, are united in *principle*, though their practices may appear something different; and *Dawson* and *Wollaston* will go on more lovingly together than *Wilkes* and *Townsend*. But as *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*; we shall do well to remember that it was not they, who *went forth with swords and with staves*, that betrayed Christ, but *the* (I had almost said the *sincere*) *Friend in whom he trusted*, he who said “*Hail Master, and kissed him.*”

Our Author, after having given this short sketch of his life, character, and behaviour, proceeds to lay before his readers “his general sense of these matters, whereby, he says, they will perceive, that he is clearly for an *alteration* in our subscriptions, and for amendments in our liturgy;” but such is his compassion for “the weaker brethren,” those who are not so strong in the faith as he is, that he by no means, good man! wishes for such alterations “as might hurt their devotions*.” His general sense of these matters he gives us with a precision peculiar to himself.

* p. 7.

That the holy scriptures are the sole foundation of the belief and practice of the true Christian is a rule of Christianity, which, he allows, was restored to us as such at the *Reformation*; though one should have supposed, from his saying that it has been frequently asserted *of late*, that he meant it had not been asserted *till of late*; but that is only the gentleman's particular manner of expressing himself.

“ But notwithstanding the *Rule* be thus
 “ *uniform*, every man, he says, who is the
 “ least conversant with what has passed in the
 “ world, must confess, that what has been
 “ drawn from these fountains, has at times
 “ been very different in many particulars*.”
 Can a fountain then send forth at the same place both bitter and sweet? Can doctrines drawn really from the scriptures be contradictory? No certainly: it is not what has been *really* drawn from these fountains, but what men have *pretended* to draw from them, that has been very different. “ Not owing
 “ usually, he thinks, to any wilful perversion
 “ of their true meaning, (which it is to be
 “ hoped has been rare †.)” But the Apostle speaks of *many who corrupted the word of God*

* p. 8.

† *ibid*,

in his days, and I fancy the times are not mended since. It was foretold likewise, that *there would be false teachers, who should privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.* Does the gentleman know of none who are engaged in that work now? “But owing to the naturally different turn of mens thoughts, which has led them to see things in very different lights*.” When Christ wrought his miracles upon earth, some said, *no man can do these miracles, except God be with him;* and others, that *he cast out Devils through Beelzebub the prince of Devils.* Was it only the naturally different turn of mens thoughts, without any wilful perversion of mind, that led them to see the same things in such very different lights? The gospel, I believe, will inform him othervise.

“This difference, with respect to the bulk of mankind in general, it seems, is immaterial†.” Indeed! is it immaterial whether they believe truth or falsehood? Yes; “because, if they endeavour sincerely to learn his will and practise accordingly, God will accept according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.‡”

* p. 8.

† ibid.

‡ ibid.

So

So then, because God will accept a man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not, it is immaterial *what* he hath, and the light of the gospel is no blessing. This may seem strange divinity; but, I suppose, it is the best that the author has got to give us; for he goes on in the same strain, and says, “and the *private* “*Christian*, though you may shew him what “you think the better way than his own, “can only believe according as the evidence “strikes himself*.” When Christ gave commission to his Apostles to go, *preach the Gospel to every creature*, would he have added, “and he that believeth not shall be damned,” unless the evidence of its truth had been sufficient for the conviction of *all*? Surely not. We may presume, therefore, that if men do not believe the Gospel when preached to them, it is not because they cannot, but because they will not; the fault is not in the understanding, but in the will; they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But he pleads hard for his countrymen, that they may “enjoy in *peace*, “that liberty of conscience which can never “be *taken* from them †,” and go—their own

* p. 9.

† *ibid.*

way; for which, no doubt, they will hereafter find themselves much obliged to him.

Though this be the privilege of *private christians*, “with regard to *teachers* the case is widely different*.” But why so? if it be immaterial what the bulk of mankind learn, surely it cannot signify much what they are taught. However, it is his opinion, in which I perfectly agree with him, that as every man, if sincere, will teach what he thinks right, however erroneous it may be, he “ought to be examined whether he be fit to “be entrusted with such an office:”—“and “ever since the time of the apostles, who received their commission from Christ himself, the rulers of every congregation, as “deriving the like authority from them, “have been those examiners†.” In this perhaps we may not agree so well; for here Mr. *Wollaston* appears very much in the character of an *obscure* Brother. I would recommend it to him, to study Ecclesiastical History before he writes again on this subject; it might serve to clear up his ideas, and render his language more intelligible. His terms are so vague and indefinite, that it is impossible to guess whether he could wish to pass for an

* P. 9.

† *ibid.*

Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, or an Independent. Who are to be understood by *Rulers*, and what by *every Congregation*? If he meant to assert that the Presbyters or Pastors of every congregation, strictly so called, had authority to examine and ordain others, he is egregiously mistaken; for there were in the christian church from the beginning, the three distinct orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, with different powers; and the power of ordination was ever reserved to the bishop: and, if he meant to maintain that the right of ordination was vested in the bishop only, as the superior officer, or supreme ruler in the church, he has expressed himself very improperly and incorrectly; for if I were to say, that the rulers of every congregation in London had a right to ordain other ministers, nobody, I suppose, would understand that I intended to assert that the power of ordination was vested in the bishop of London only.

Our author is not more perspicuous in his state of the case, “when afterwards the governors of nations became christian.” He blends the Civil and Ecclesiastical power together, which ought to be carefully distinguished, if we would speak to any purpose

on

on the subject; and he seems to look upon the church from that time, as nothing more than a creature of the state; though it is still as distinct a society as ever, and has distinct authority. There are spiritual powers inherent in the church, which the state has no more right to exercise, than Jeroboam had to offer incense; and on the other hand, the church, *as such*, is no ways concerned with the temporal authority belonging to the state. The church subsisted for three hundred years in the exercise of all its just powers, independent on the state, and so it may do again; for it derives its authority, which is purely spiritual, from Christ and not from the state. The Christian religion being established by the civil magistrate, does not make the church and a civil society become the same thing, as this gentleman seems to imagine; for the church remains the same religious society it was before, subsisting on the foundation it was first built on, with the same offices and administrations, the same social rules, and the same terms of union between the members. “ When the
 “ governors of nations became christian, says
 “ our author, and observed such a *diversity*
 “ of opinions as had arisen among man-
 C 2 “ kind,

“ kind, they thought it necessary to inter-
 “ pose in this matter ; esteeming it their duty
 “ to provide by some *farther* examination,
 “ that the Christian religion be taught in
 “ their several kingdoms in the *purest man-*
 “ *ner**.” Whatever *farther* examination the
 doctrines of the Gospel may have undergone,
 I believe that they have never been taught in
greater purity since the alliance of the church
 with the state, than they were before it. But
 who composed the council of *Nice* which
 condemned the Arian heresy ? Were they
Senators or *Bishops* ? did they derive their
 authority from *Christ* or *Constantine* ? The
 council was held indeed under the patronage
 and protection of the emperor, who had
 been converted to the Christian faith ; but
 the occasion of it was a matter of doctrine,
 which concerned the church, and therefore
 the ecclesiastical, not the civil governors,
 were the proper persons to consider of it.
 “ The legislators of every country, as he goes
 “ on, take care to have it (the Christian re-
 “ ligion) taught in that manner they judge
 “ most pure ; and do naturally give their
 “ countenance to such teachers as are of their
own sentiments ‡ :” True ; the legislators

* p. 9.

‡ p. 10.

must be the judges what religion shall be established, and they will certainly countenance that which they best approve ; but let it be remembered, that their authority does not extend to the appointment of teachers in the Christian church : “ While those, he “ says, who are of a *different* persuasion, examine and encourage teachers who think “ like themselves*.” The regular antecedent to *those* is, I think, *legislators* ; but I apprehend he does not mean to set up different legislators in the same kingdom. However, be they who they will, it seems “ the disciple is above his master,” they who are to be taught, are to examine those who are to teach them, and they are to learn only what they like ; from whence we may fairly conclude, that the scholar will not be much the wiser or better for the instruction of the teacher.

“ Now in *this* examination,” (which we have seen is rather curious, when considered in all its parts,) “ some general *test* has always been thought proper to be offered to “ the candidates for orders or preferments “ in *every* congregation,” (a favourite phrase of the author’s that serves for *every* purpose,

without any precise meaning) “for them to
 “subscribe or declare as an assurance that
 “they *agree* with their governors in opi-
 “nion*.” But who are these governors? are
 they the civil or ecclesiastical power? Why,
 they are the legislators of every country, the
 governors of nations, according to our au-
 thor. But the candidates he speaks of are
 candidates for holy orders, for the office
 of ministers in the church; and are the
 rulers in the state, who have no lawful au-
 thority to appoint them to the office, the
 proper judges of their qualifications for it?
 The rulers of the church, who alone have
 a right to ordain ministers in the church,
 are surely the proper persons to examine into
 the qualifications of the candidates for or-
 ders; and they are the governors to whom
 the candidates are to give assurance that
 they will conform to the rules of the church,
 and be faithful ministers of it. It is a pity
 that the gentleman cannot distinguish be-
 tween a civil and a religious society, and see
 how the state may support the church with-
 out encroaching upon the rights and pri-
 vileges of it. “Every minister, he says,
 “when appointed, is indeed a *minister* of

* p. 10.

“*Christ**.” But I presume, that something depends upon the authority by which he is appointed; and the ordination of an *alderman* would not be so valid as that of a *bishop*, even though the state should approve it: “and as “such is bound to teach pure Christianity:” he is so; and I wish all who are legally appointed would do it; not bending the Scriptures to their own conceits, as is the practice of too many; but submitting their reason to the wisdom of God, and bringing into subjection every thought to the obedience of Christ. That the *Bible* is the *only rule of faith* to every consistent *Protestant* we all allow; and he has determined, with the sagacity of a philosopher, that, “if such a one “agrees with the congregation of any “church in their method of understanding “that rule, it is no *restraint* upon him to “*subscribe* to their *terms*, and receive their “*emoluments*†.” But he thinks “those “*terms* should not descend to more particular, or be more confined, than absolute necessity requires ‡:” that is, I suppose, he would have them so very comprehensive, that, in case the *consistent* Protestant should be blown about by every wind of doctrine,

* p. 11.

† *ibid.*‡ *ibid.*

he may still find shelter in the church, and enjoy its emoluments with a calm and unruffled conscience; “ because, if they be “ such, that in his conscience he cannot “ agree to all that the state,” (why will not the gentleman speak properly and say, all that the *church*, supported in her authority by the *state*?) “ really expects from him; or “ *bonâ fide* keep in that opinion, as he advances (let me add, or *goes backwards*) in “ his studies, he ought neither to submit to “ such a *restraint* at his first entrance, nor “ continue under it afterwards*”; and then he will be reduced to the disagreeable necessity, either of doing what he ought not, or of relinquishing his preferments, which no *prudent* man would wish; and indeed, the temptation to do wrong must be next to insuperable, if we may judge from the conduct of the gentlemen who are exposed to it: for we hear of very few among them who *esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt*, and sacrifice their interest to their conscience. But still, as to the author’s scheme of a test, which shall be no trial of a man’s faith; that is, a test and no test, I cannot say that I approve it;

for I do not see how the allowing of men to preach contrary doctrines is consistent with the exhortation of the apostle to the church of Corinth, where he says, *I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment**.

We have now taken a cursory view of what the author, by a certain figure of speech, calls "*general truths*, which are "*common to all establishments*;" and we are next to see his application of them to our own †, with his sentiments of our present forms, and his reasons for praying relief in the matter of *Subscription*.

He says, that "*the Church of England, our national church, (or the state, for in this respect they may be considered as the same) proposes on her part, such terms of communion, as to her appear right* ‡." This is a striking sentence, and worthy of its author. But as the church and the state are distinct societies, and not the same, the one being temporal and the other spiritual; as the Church has a right to propose

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

† p. 12.

‡ *ibid.*

terms of communion to her members, whether she be established by the civil power or not; and as the subject in question is the appointment of pastors in the church, would it not have been more agreeable to the fitness of things, and less likely to mislead people as to the real nature and constitution of the Church of England, if he had said, that the church, the guardian of truth, by the authority derived to her from Christ and the Apostles, the state concurring therewith, proposes on her part such terms of communion as to her appear right? "All that she can design by this, he thinks, is only to give such heads of *doctrine*, as a guide to her prelates, what particular points *she* requires of them to enquire into*." These heads of doctrine are the Articles of the church, which contain what the compilers, he allows, considered as the fundamentals of Christianity. These, he says, are the points to be enquired into, "*besides* the general and more important and purely Christian ones; of a good *life* and sound *learning* and *abilities* for the several offices to be undertaken†." Thanks to the gentleman for his information: I do not recol-

* p. 12.

† *ibid.*

lect ever to have heard before, that *learning* and *abilities* were Christian points; much less that they were "more purely Christian ones," than the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And after all, let a man's learning and abilities be ever so great, they will not qualify him for the office of a Christian teacher, if he does not believe the doctrines, which, as such, he is bound to inculcate. "As to the terms; they are only to see that they are *complied* with*:" And surely that is no trifling charge; for, I hope, he thinks it is their duty to see, that their clergy *preach* the doctrines of the church, as well as *subscribe* them: And "the compliers are to see, that they do it with a safe conscience;" that is, I presume, they are to see, that they do not subscribe the articles "with a latitude of interpretation, which is no where authorized."

The life and abilities of the candidates are no part of his present consideration; else, he says, it might be lamented, that the bishops find themselves (to their sorrow) necessitated, from having so few who offer, out of whom to make any choice, to remit somewhat of that strictness they would think

* p. 12.

right to use in admitting persons to the ministry*. I lament as sincerely as he can do, that any should be appointed to the ministry, who are not duly qualified; but it must be confessed, that some of those, “who
“are led into it even from free *choice*,” seem to have forgotten their catechism, and, instead of being fit for teachers, *have need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*

“But with respect to the *terms of subscription*; they are become an occasion of “grief on another account†.” The author does not mention to *whom*, nor on *what* account; whether to the bishops, because they cannot remit of that strictness in this case, which they would gladly observe in the other; or whether to some particular candidates, who cannot enjoy the preferments of the church without declaring their unfeigned assent to doctrines they do not believe: though in my opinion, the real occasion of grief is to all the friends of truth and soberness, who cannot but lament that, notwithstanding all the care of the church to maintain sound doctrine, there should be found within her pale so many to corrupt it, who,

* See p. 13.

† *ibid.*

though

thought they *eat of her bread, lift up their heel against her.*

“ We are a reformed church—and, as such, he says, can justify our using *some* method to declare our abhorrence of popery*.” We can; and as there are opinions maintained by some, who call themselves Protestants, which are equally repugnant to sound doctrine, with those held by the church of Rome, we may be justified in using *some* method to declare our abhorrence of *them* likewise. “ This (declaring our abhorrence of popery) was the origin of *our terms* :” true; it was the origin of our terms in their *present form*; but they are likewise declaratory of all the great doctrines of Christianity, and as such were used in the church from the beginning, before popery had a being—“ which need be traced back no farther than the *Reformation*.” This assertion, in the confined sense in which the author speaks of our terms, is very curious, and is as if he had said, that, in writing the life of a man, it was not necessary to go farther back, than the *day of his birth*.

“ About that time the *Articles* and *Liturgy* were framed; and if we reflect, says our

* P. 13.

“ author, that the compilers had themselves
 “ been brought up in popery, we shall won-
 “ der, both that they could persuade them-
 “ selves to throw off *so much* of her *supersti-*
 “ *tion*; and that they did not, as was too
 “ natural, reject every thing, whether good
 “ or bad, because it had been used in the
 “ Romish church*.” So natural is it, *in his*
opinion, for the same cause, at the same time,
 to produce quite contrary effects! However,
 he allows, “ they distinguished carefully be-
 “ tween the good and bad, and, from all the best
 “ Liturgies of ancient times, framed one though
 “ perhaps not quite perfect, yet the most per-
 “ fect that ever was in established use†.”
 This is not saying more of it than it deserves;
 but it seems, notwithstanding all this, they
 still retained too much of what he does not
 like; he hopes, “ not of popery;” no, for
 that would be terrible indeed, and I will
 venture to assure him for his comfort, that
 there is nothing in it *peculiar* to popery:
 “ but of the *prejudices* of their education, and
 “ the turn of those times ‡;” as he is inclined
 to think, though he hardly knows what to
 think; only it is something which he does
 not like. But if he really wants to know

* p. 13, 14.

† p. 14.

‡ *ibid.*

what it is that he does not like, and will leave a line for me with my Bookseller, I believe I can satisfy him on that head.

His idea of the *Articles* is not altogether so favourable. He speaks of them as “containing what were *considered* as fundamentals of Christianity*,” insinuating as if they were *not really* so, “and deciding many abstruse metaphysical questions, which ought not to be *insisted upon*†.” But I do not see how he can consistently speak such excellent things, as he does, of the Liturgy, and disapprove the Articles; for the doctrines of the Articles are interwoven with all the parts of the Liturgy, and they must both stand or fall together.

“We have great reason to be thankful, he says, to those of our ancestors, who did *so much* for us‡;” but it seems they left a great deal undone. “Were *they* to do it now; and had they the farther light, which after two centuries’ experience, and two centuries’ advancement in learning, has shone upon *us*; they certainly would frame those models differently, and more conformably to their increase of knowledge§”—that is, if their knowledge was

* p. 14.

† *ibid.*

‡ p. 15

§ *ibid.*

of the same cast and complection with our author's. " Every age, says an ingenious
 " writer §, hath had that common failing of
 " imagining itself to be wiser than all that
 " went before it; and the wisdom of the
 " present is frequently boasted of by very ig-
 " norant people.—Allowing to human lite-
 " rature all that can be desired, yet to think
 " of improving the Christianity of the pri-
 " mitive church, is to suppose that its doc-
 " trines like the idols of paganism, were
 " *graven by art and man's device*; and they, I
 " fear, who are so zealous in behalf of pre-
 " tended improvements and reformatations,
 " would willingly mend the Christian faith
 " by putting something else in its place, like
 " dishonest painters, who, being trusted with
 " a valuable picture to clean and repair it,
 " bring home again some vile copy of their
 " own instead of it." " This task then (of
 a farther reformation) is left for *us*" says Mr.
 Wollaston; but I hope not; " and what
 " we now *lament*, continues he, is; that in
 " this age we still are obliged to *subscribe*,

§ William Jones, rector of Pluckley in Kent; whose theo-
 logical Tracts may be had separately, or in three vols. octa-
 vo, Printed for G. Robinson, Pater-noster-row; and are
 worthy the diligent perusal of *the Clergy of the Church of Eng-
 land in particular, and of all Christians in general.*

" and

“ and declare our *unfeigned* approbation and
 “ *assent* to, this *antiquated* model*.” I wonder he does not lament that he is obliged to see by the light of the same sun, which people have done for so many thousand years. If his objection is of any force, it operates as strongly against the light of the Sun, and the light of the Gospel itself, as against the Articles and Liturgy; and we must petition for a new sun, and a new Gospel, as well as new Articles and a new Liturgy. If the doctrines of the Articles were the doctrines of the Scriptures at the Reformation, they are so still, and can never be antiquated: if they were not, let him shew wherein they differ. But it is another Gospel, as well as other Articles, that he wants, for the present is not for his turn; however, I hope *we* shall be content with the old, and “ *contend as earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints,*” as these innovators do *against* it.

“ If it be here asked, why was this not
 “ done before? he thinks the answer was obvious, It was *difficult*. Not only religious
 “ differences; but civil dissensions, warmth
 “ and passion, party and *politics*, introduced
 “ themselves into a matter of *conscience*, and

* p. 15.

“ prevented it *.” And why should not party and politics be concerned in it, when he makes the whole a state matter? “ But the times, he says, are fairer for it than they have ever been.” Let us hope not. And “ it is not a matter that concerns one party, rather than another in the state.” That is more than he knows: and a change of doctrine might introduce a change of government sooner than he is aware of; we know what destruction the Arian heresy brought on the Christian empire in the East. “ For it is not any authority of our governors that now is called in question, he says; but some abstruse, and, perhaps *unnecessary* doctrines in our Articles, and some *few* passages in our Liturgy; and above all, the form of subscribing both, that are objected against.” Why will not the gentleman speak out? really he mumbles like a certain animal when he has got thistles in his mouth: surely something pricks him. It would have been but civil in him to have mentioned, for our information, what these “ perhaps unnecessary doctrines ” are; and indeed I think he should have done it for his own sake; for people are much divided in their opinions on

that head; and some, of a very liberal turn of mind, think the Being of a God, an *abstruse unnecessary doctrine*, which ought not to be *insisted upon*; and, as he is so extremely shy of pointing out what he reckons such, he may be suspected as being of the same opinion. As to the *Form* of subscribing, I suppose the objection can only lie against the word *unfeigned*; and if that might be changed into *feigned*, I apprehend he would be perfectly satisfied; as another gentleman said he should be, if his modest proposal was agreed to; which was nothing more than to make an exceeding small amendment in the Commandments and Belief; only just to transpose the minute particle *not* from the negative precepts in the decalogue, and set it after I *believe* in the Creed. “As the nature of *toleration* is now better understood, and all points, religious as well as civil, are more freely discussed, and more liberally considered*, he thinks, that, as it renders an alteration more *necessary* (though, I believe he would be puzzled to show why) so it will render it more easy of reception too; unless the warmth of its advocates should create it enemies†:” that is, he is appre-

* p. 16.

† *ibid.*

hensive, if his friends should put themselves in a passion, they will be off their guard, and discover their real designs; which will rouse their enemies, as they call the Orthodox, who will then stand upon their defence, and the project will be defeated: but if they act with *discretion* and *temper*, he has little doubt of success; if they come like the harlot in the Proverbs, *with much fair speech, and with flattering lips*, they think that the friends of the church will yield to their solicitations, and not know *till a dart strike through their liver, that it is for their life*.

But it is to his superiors in the church, that our author looks up with confidence, in hopes, through their means, to obtain relief in the matter of Subscription. “ They are
 “ of a liberal turn of mind, and have made
 “ advances in learning,” “ their truly episcopal temper makes them less sanguine, and
 “ less tenacious of their own opinions, and
 “ more ready to defer to those of others. They
 “ stand upon an eminence, whence they command a more extensive prospect, and therefore must know better than ourselves, how
 “ to remove our difficulties, and to put
 “ things on the most proper footing; and
 “ their moderation is known unto all men.
 “ Was

“ Was it in them to grant, they, no doubt,
 “ would give, unsolicited, a more liberal
 “ form of Subscription at least : during the
 “ late recess of parliament, they have had
 “ time to digest these matters ; and there is
 “ reason to hope, that they have resolved it
 “ in their thoughts *how* to effect what is *best* ;
 “ so that we may confide in their prudence
 “ for obtaining the most proper redress for
 “ us*.” These are the exalted strains, in
 which the gentleman speaks of the right re-
 verend bench ; and so sublime are his ideas of
 them, that, upon my word, I begin to trem-
 ble for him, lest he lapse into idolatry : he
 seems to take them for *gods come down to us in*
the likeness of men ; and like, another *priest of*
Jupiter, he brings *oxen and garlands unto the*
gates of the episcopal palaces, to do sacrifice
unto them. But they, as well as *Paul and*
Barnabas, are sensible, I dare say, that they
 are *men of like passion with us* ; and I hope they
 will restrain the intemperate zeal of the *priest*,
 and prevent him from doing sacrifice to
 them.

But pray what authority has he for saying
 that “ they cannot but see, and do indeed
 “ acknowledge, the propriety of an amend-

* p. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

“ ment,

“ment, as strongly as any of us*” He would persuade us that he knows them *intus et in cute*; but, whatever *he* may know of *them*, I think *they* must be pretty well acquainted with *him* by this time; and see clearly enough, that all this *crouching* to them is not only for a *morsel of bread*, but with a view to be put into a good stall, and be raised, through their means, to an *eminence*, from whence *he* likewise may command an agreeable and *extensive prospect*.

“They may not be all of one mind,” he says, and perhaps they are not: there was a *Judas* among the Apostles, and there may be such a character now in the Episcopal college; but I trust that they are, for the most part, faithful guardians of the church, who will watch over her for safety; and will not consent to the breaking down of the walls of our Jerusalem, to let in the enemy to defile the sanctuary.

He says, “they know that a test either
 “must be very *simple*, in its terms; (that is,
 “determine nothing) or must be *altered*
 “from time to time, as new lights arise; or
 “must, after a while, be used almost as a
 “mere form, with great latitude of inter-

* P. 17.

“pretation*.” But I am persuaded better things of them, and that they know the direct contrary. They know that the gospel, like its author, is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*; that a test, which hath the scripture for its foundation is not subject to change; and that no *new lights* can arise of more authority than the *old*.

We have now seen our author’s sentiments of the present *forms*; and all that appears is, that he does not like them. He talks of unnecessary doctrines in the *Articles*, and exceptionable passages in the *Liturgy*; but he does not mention which they are, and therefore all that he hath said is mere flourish. His reasons for an application for relief in the matter of subscription, have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. If he do not believe the doctrines to be subscribed, it is a reason why he should not subscribe them, but it is no reason why subscription should not be required. The church lays down what appears to her to be the doctrines of scripture, and they have never yet been disproved. Her intention is, that none shall be admitted to the office of ministers in her communion, who do not believe them; that

* p. 17.

her teachers may *all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions*. To be required to give this security to the church cannot be “dis-
 “treffing to an honest and ingenuous mind*,” for such a one will not subscribe what he doth not believe; but if men, for filthy lucre sake, will prevaricate, and use that “lati-
 “tude in a solemn act, which no honest
 “man would allow himself to use in any
 “other contract, however trifling †,” the *misfortune* is to the church; but the *dis-
 grace* is to themselves; and let not such men complain that the “yoke galls them ‡;” for they are not obliged to wear it, they may throw it off, whenever they will.

Our author sums up the whole § with the substance of a petition which he wishes to be preferred to the bishops, and I will conclude with what I wish the real friends of the church may present to them by way of counter-petition.—That the present set of *Articles*, which, for the soundness of their doctrine, are the glory and ornament of our church, and cannot aggrieve any but its open or secret enemies, may be preserved to us whole and entire; for we have no objection to subscribing them *fairly*, as they contain

* p. 18.

† p. 22.

‡ *ibid.*

§ p. 21.

nothing but what “ is read in holy scripture, “ or may be proved thereby ;” and we verily think they are our best security against the Papist, the Infidel, and the Heretick. That our *Liturgy*, compiled from the Liturgies of the first and purest ages of the church, not only as to the form, but as to the matter and expressions, and composed with such simplicity and majesty, as to be adapted to the capacities of the ignorant and unlearned, and edifying and instructive to the most enlightened, may be continued to us in its present perfection, without addition, and without mutilation. That our *church* may still be, what it always hath been, the honour of the reformation, the strongest bulwark of the Gospel against Popery, and the brightest star in the Christian firmament. The terms of our communion are pure and scriptural ; and if they, who *now dissent* from us, will continue to do so, the fault is theirs not ours ; we have done our duty, and they are to see whether separation from such a church does not involve them in the guilt of Schism.

F I N I S.



